

Bunning	Ensign	Rockefeller
Burr	Enzi	Sanders
Byrd	Grassley	Sessions
Chambliss	Harkin	Shelby
Coburn	Hatch	Smith
Cochran	Hutchison	Stabenow
Coleman	Inhofe	Stevens
Collins	Isakson	Sununu
Corker	Landrieu	Tester
Cornyn	McCaskill	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Vitter
DeMint	Murkowski	Voinovich
Dole	Nelson (NE)	Warner
Domenici	Pryor	Webb
Dorgan	Roberts	

NOT VOTING—1

Johnson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 46, the nays are 53. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the vote has been cast. As I told a number of my Republican friends, even though the vote is disheartening to me in many ways, I think as a result of this legislative work we have done in the last several months on this legislation, there have been friendships developed that were not there before, trust initiated that did not exist before. I say to my friends, Democrats and Republicans, this is a legislative issue. It will come back; it is only a question of when. We are only 6 months into this Congress. We have so much to do.

Hopefully, this lesson we have all learned will be one where we recognize we have to work more closely together. I hope we can do that. I say to all of you, thank you very much for your patience—the phone calls I have made; if I twisted arms, it was not very often. I so appreciate—I think I speak for all of us—being able to be part of this great Senate where we are able to participate in decisions such as this.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent we go to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and Senator ROBERT C. BYRD be recognized to speak for double what everyone else is allowed to speak, 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The President pro tempore is recognized for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore is recognized for 20 minutes.

GROWING OLDER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I feel compelled to address head on, I mean head on, the news stories in recent weeks that have pointed out the shocking discovery, yes, shocking discovery, that I am growing older. Did you get that? Shocking discovery that I am growing older.

I find it no surprise, but then I have had some time to become accustomed

to the increasing distance between the year of my birth and the current date. I may not like it, but as Maurice Chevalier put it:

Old age is not so bad when you consider the alternative.

A recent Associated Press story ran in West Virginia's Charleston Daily Mail. The headline read: Dramatic change in signatures shows that age is catching up with Senator BYRD. The newspaper offered as proof the signatures on my Senate financial disclosure forms from last year and this year. It is true that this year's signature looks like I signed it in a moving car. Some days, the benign essential tremor that I have had for years now is worse than on other days, just as it is for the approximately 5 million other people in the United States who suffer from similar tremors. It is annoying, but it is hardly evidence that I am at death's door.

Nor should it come as a surprise that I use canes to help me get around or that I am not always as fast as I once was. I am not aware of any requirement for physical dexterity in order to hold the office of U.S. Senator. The often grueling hours working in the Senate requires are tough on far junior Senators, and I am no longer one of the younger Senators.

But to worry in print that I have missed one vote this year? Really. Out of more than 18,000 votes in my career, to miss one vote or two votes every now and then is surely excusable. Even old people can be allowed a sick day or two now and then, can't they?

That is really the crux of the matter. In this Internet-savvy, media-infused culture, we have forgotten that people do get older, even, dare I say it, old. Television is full of pretty young people. The few white-haired heads that one sees on television are made up and glamorous. Off camera, though, most bear little resemblance to their TV persona.

In a culture of Botox, wrinkle cream, and hair dye, we cannot imagine that becoming older is a good thing, an experience to look forward to, a state worthy of respect. If I were 50 years old and used canes due to some injury or had a disease-related tremor, the newsletter stories would be about my carrying on despite my adversities. But my only adversity is age. Age.

In real life, the lucky ones among us do get old. We move down the steep slope, to the far right of the bell curve of age. The really lucky ones, and I almost count myself among them, get to be aged, into their nineties or even older, a distinction that I think is naturally paired with the wisdom borne of experience. We do get white hair, yes. And we do get wrinkles. And we move more slowly. We worry about falling down because we do not bounce up the way we used to.

Our brains are still sharp, but our tongues are slower. We have learned, sometimes the hard way, to think before we speak. I hope, however, that what we have to say is worth the wait.

Many good things are worth the wait. Grandma Moses did not take up painting until the age of 75. She painted some 1,600 paintings, 250 of which she painted after her 100th birthday. Michelangelo was still working on frescos and sculptures when he died at the age of 89.

Age is no barrier to accomplishment. When the spirit and the mind are willing, the creative juices continue to flow. I like to think that I still have a few things left on my to-do list. I also like to think that someday our rapidly aging society will get over its fear and its denial of aging. We had better get over it quickly because the demographics tell us our senior population is rapidly growing.

If my colleagues still show deference to me, as the news article reported, I hope it is due to my experience, my position as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and my ability as a Senator. If they are patient with me as I turn the page, I hope that is an example of the Golden Rule; that they show patience with my minor adversities of age as they hope that someday others will show to them.

After all, the Senate is not exactly full of spring chickens. You better believe it. It is not supposed to be. The Senate was designed to give age and experience a chance to flourish, and the rules give slower speakers—the rules give slower speakers a chance to be heard.

Five percent of Senators date from the roaring 1920s. All of them served in World War II. The Senate will truly lose a great generation when they decide, if ever, if ever, to retire.

Almost a quarter of Senators date from the 1930s, including many seasoned committee chairmen and ranking members. I am sure my younger colleagues on the Appropriations Committee appreciate the opportunity to play a larger role as appropriations bills move through the Senate, as the recent articles reported.

As I have gotten older, I have learned to have great trust and great respect for my colleagues, many of whom I have worked with for many years. Why is that decried as a bad thing? Why should not these fine Senators, now in their fifties through their eighties, get to spread their wings while the old wise BYRD watches?

Abraham Lincoln once rightly observed:

In the end, it's not the years of your life that count. It's the life in your years.

My only adversity—my only adversity is age. It is not a bar to my usefulness as a Senator. I still look out for West Virginia. I still zealously guard the welfare of this Nation and its Constitution. I still work every day to move the business of this Nation forward, to end this reckless adventure in Iraq, and to protect, to preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States against all those who would reshape it to suit partisan agenda. I will continue to do this work until this old